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**Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and
strengthening of the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of outcomes and results of the substantive issues addressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/207. It describes progress made in the following areas: assessment of urbanization trends and advocacy for sustainable urbanization; urban planning, management and governance; land and housing policies; basic urban infrastructure and services; human settlements finance systems; and governance and management of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The report concludes that the role of cities in climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as issues of access to adequate housing, serviced land and basic urban services such as water and sanitation, are central to sustainable development. In light of these conclusions, it is important that Member States recognize the expertise and contribution of UN-Habitat to the upcoming 20-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The report also encourages Governments and other public and private entities to contribute to the further capitalization of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for enhanced investment in slum upgrading and prevention, including water supply and sanitation.

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The report concludes that, in light of the emerging urban challenges, including rapid and chaotic urbanization, climate change, the global economic crisis, poverty and inequality and the geographical expansion of cities into huge megalopolises, the convening of a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016 would be timely.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 64/207 on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

II. Understanding current urban challenges and raising global awareness of sustainable urbanization

2. During the reporting period, the focus of UN-Habitat's normative work sought to improve monitoring of sustainable urbanization conditions and trends. It also sought to deepen understanding of the current challenges of urbanization, including urban inequality or the "urban divide", and to assess how urban policies and planning practices are responding to the challenges. Advocacy work focused on improving global awareness of sustainable urbanization issues at the national and global levels and encouraging partners in the Habitat Agenda to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of sustainable urbanization policies. The fundamental objective of all of this work was to assist Governments in promoting the principles and practice of sustainable urbanization, in line with paragraph 4 of resolution 64/207.

3. Building on the above normative and advocacy work, and in line with paragraphs 10 and 14 of resolution 64/207, UN-Habitat also started preparing a report on the possibility of convening a high-level special event of the General Assembly on sustainable urbanization, to promote understanding of the challenges of rapid urbanization, including climate change, housing finance systems, urban planning and sustainable land management, as well as a second report on the question of convening, in 2016, a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development. Both reports will be considered by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its twenty-third session in April 2011.

A. Current urbanization challenges

4. The major human settlements factors shaping cities in the twenty-first century are manifest in all regions of the world. Two UN-Habitat publications highlight the matter, the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2009*, entitled *Planning Sustainable Cities*, which identified a number of major challenges, including demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges; and the *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Cities for All-Bridging the Urban Divide*, which focused on the phenomenon of intra-urban inequality along a number of dimensions, including poverty, environmental degradation, income, marginalization and various forms of social and political exclusion. The main factors and challenges shaping cities and towns, as identified in these two flagship reports, are highlighted below.

Demographic challenges and the growing demand for urban services

5. The global urban transition witnessed over the last decades has been phenomenal, presenting Governments and local authorities with challenges never before faced. While the period 1950-1975 saw population growth more or less

evenly divided between the urban and rural areas of the world, in the period since the balance has tipped dramatically in favour of urban growth. In 2008, for the first time in history, over half of the world's population was living in urban areas and, according to current projections, this will have risen to 70 per cent by 2050. Almost all of this growth will take place in developing countries. Between 2007 and 2025, the annual urban population increase in developing countries is expected to be 53 million (or 2.27 per cent), compared to a mere 3 million (or 0.49 per cent) in developed countries.

6. In the *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011*, it was noted that between 2000 and 2010, 227 million people in the developing world gained access to one or more of the following: adequate drinking water, safe sanitation, structurally improved housing and less crowded housing. This achievement was not uniformly distributed across regions however; the more advanced developing countries made better progress than the poorer developing countries. In the course of the same period, the number of slum dwellers actually increased by 6 million every year.

7. A key problem is that most of the rapid urban growth is taking place in countries least able to cope, in terms of the ability of Governments to provide or facilitate the provision of urban infrastructure; the ability of urban residents to pay for such services; and resilience to natural disasters. The inevitable result has been the rapid growth of urban slums and squatter settlements.

Environmental challenges

8. One of the most significant environmental challenges at present is climate change. In urban areas, it will negatively affect access to water and hundreds of millions of people will be vulnerable to rising sea levels, coastal flooding and related natural disasters as global warming increases. Recent research shows that 13 per cent of the world's urban population is living in low elevation coastal zones, which are defined as being less than 10 metres above sea level. If sea levels rise by just one metre, many large coastal cities, including Buenos Aires, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, New York, Mumbai, Dhaka, Osaka, Tokyo, Lagos, Alexandria, Shanghai and Cairo will come under threat.

9. Moreover, it will be the poorest countries and people who will be most vulnerable to this threat and who will suffer first and most acutely. The high cost of land and housing in urban areas is currently pushing the lowest-income people into locations that are prone to natural hazards, such that 4 out of every 10 non-permanent houses in the developing world are now located in areas threatened by floods, landslides and other natural disasters, particularly in slums and informal settlements. Significantly, such disasters are only partly a result of natural forces; they are also products of failed urban development and planning.

10. A second major concern is the environmental impact of the use of fossil fuels in urban areas. The global use of oil as an energy source has both promoted and permitted urbanization, and its easy availability has allowed the emergence of low density and sprawling urban areas, suburbia, dependent on private cars. Response to the post-oil era presents a whole range of new imperatives for urban development, especially in terms of settlement density and transportation.

11. Rapid urban growth in the past 50 years has meant that managing the built (or human) environment while coping with environmental pollution (especially waste)

and degradation has become a significant challenge, especially in the developing world. Fewer than 35 per cent of the cities in developing countries have their waste water treated; worldwide 2.5 billion and 1.2 billion people, respectively, lack access to safe sanitation and clean water; and between one third and one half of the solid waste generated within most cities in low and middle income countries is not collected. Most of this deprivation is concentrated in urban slums and informal settlements.

Economic challenges

12. Processes of globalization and economic restructuring in recent decades have impacted, and will continue to impact, urban settlements in both developed and developing countries in various ways. Particularly significant has been the impact of such processes on urban labour markets, which show a growing polarization of occupational and income structures (and hence growing income inequality) caused, in developed countries, by the growth of the service sector and the decline in manufacturing. There have also been important gender dimensions to this restructuring: over the last several decades women have increasingly moved into paid employment, but trends towards "casualization" of the labour force (through an increase in part-time, contract and home-based work) have made them highly vulnerable in times of economic crisis.

13. The global economic crisis, which began in the housing finance sector in 2008, has accelerated economic restructuring and unemployment in all parts of the world. One important impact of the crisis on urban labour markets has been rapid growth of the urban informal economy in all regions of the world, and particularly in developing countries. Informal sector jobs account for more than 50 per cent of all employment in Africa as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a little lower in Asia. Among the most significant urban challenges that Governments have to address in the next few decades, especially in developing countries, are how to respond to increasing poverty and inequality, as well as to the rapidly expanding urban informal sector.

Social and spatial challenges

14. Governments and local authorities have increasingly found themselves confronted by new urban configurations and social processes, which, primarily, seem to be in the direction of fragmentation, separation and specialization of functions within cities, including labour market polarization (and hence income inequality), as reflected in growing differences between wealthier and poorer areas of cities in both developed and developing countries. Highly visible contrasts have emerged between up-market gentrified and suburban areas and tenement zones, ethnic enclaves and ghettos, as well as between areas designed for the advanced service and production sector and luxury retail and entertainment and older areas of declining industry, sweatshops and informal businesses.

15. In some parts of the world, fear of crime has increased urban fragmentation as middle and upper income households segregate themselves into gated communities and other types of high security residential complexes. Gated communities have multiplied in a number of major metropolitan areas, including Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Santiago, Johannesburg and Pretoria.

16. In many poorer cities, spatial forms are largely driven by the efforts of low income households to secure land that is affordable and in a location close to employment and other sources of livelihood. This process is leading to entirely new urban structures as the countryside itself begins to urbanize. The bulk of rapid urban growth in developing countries is, in fact, now taking place in unplanned peri-urban areas, leading to the emergence of huge megalopolises and urban corridors and giving rise to the need to enlarge the geographical scale of urban governance.

B. World Urban Forum

17. The most significant global advocacy event during the reporting period was the fifth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Rio de Janeiro from 22 to 26 March 2010. Over 10,600 people from 150 countries, representing all Habitat Agenda partners, attended the session. The Presidents of Brazil and Uganda, the Prime Minister of Haiti and the Vice-Presidents of the Philippines and Spain opened the Forum.

18. The theme of the World Urban Forum was "The Right to the City — Bridging the Urban Divide". The vibrant discussions at the Forum produced a wide range of insights and new ideas, including on emerging urban inequality, policy alternatives and effective practices in human settlements development. Climate change discussions attracted a lot of interest, highlighting the contribution of cities to climate change, the differential impacts of climate change on cities and their diverse communities and effective mitigation and adaptation measures at the urban level.

19. The discussions also validated the non-legislative format of the Forum as a unique and effective vehicle for international dialogue among a wide range of participants, including Government ministers, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society, the private sector and international organizations. As in previous sessions of the Forum, the discussions, which took the form of dialogues, round tables, training events, networking events and side events, were open and frank.

20. The World Urban Youth Assembly and Gender Equality Action Assembly, which form an integral part of the World Urban Forum, in compliance with resolutions 22/4 and 22/7 of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, were held for two days before the official opening of the Forum. The World Urban Youth Assembly brought together over 500 youth representatives from a cross-section of the world's regions and countries, most of them representing youth-led development organizations. The Gender Equality Action Assembly was attended by 361 participants from 36 countries.

21. At the closing of the session, the Government of Bahrain offered to host the sixth session of the World Urban Forum in early 2012.

C. Global Urban Campaign

22. Another significant advocacy tool during the reporting period was the Global Urban Campaign, which was launched by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat during the fifth session of the World Urban Forum. The Campaign's fundamental objective is to raise global awareness of sustainable urbanization issues and to help Governments and all Habitat Agenda partners to advance the goal of smarter,

greener and more equitable cities. The Campaign is one of the key strategies of the UN-Habitat medium-term strategic and institutional plan, that of forging effective partnerships with and among the public, private and civil society sectors, with UN-Habitat playing a catalytic role in the process.

23. A steering committee of major partners and groups was established prior to the Campaign's launch in Rio de Janeiro. More than 50 partners, representing global and thematic networks of cities, professionals, civil society and the private sector, committed themselves to the Campaign. Five United Nations agencies (the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the International Telecommunication Union) have also associated their own global campaigns with the World Urban Campaign.

24. Representatives of a number of partner organizations, including the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, Building and Wood Workers' International, the Habitat Professionals Forum, the United Cities and Local Governments, the Huairou Commission, the Habitat International Coalition and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, signed a compact in support of the World Urban Campaign as a framework for collaboration in elevating the principles of sustainable urbanization in public policy and public and private investment. A number of journalists also signed the compact.

25. The 100 Cities Initiative, a key component of the Campaign, was also launched during the World Urban Forum. The Initiative builds on the concept of best practices, focusing on the sharing, exchange and transfer of lessons learned. The Initiative will include a 100 Cities Summit, which is to take place in Alicante, Spain, in 2011.

D. Shanghai World Exposition

26. The Shanghai World Exposition 2010 is yet another global advocacy mechanism for the promotion of the sustainable urbanization agenda. Under the theme "Better City, Better Life", the exposition, which is expected to attract 70 million visitors, opened on 1 May 2010 and will run until 31 October 2010. UN-Habitat has coordinated the participation of all United Nations agencies, programmes and funds in a 3,000 square metre United Nations pavilion. The theme of the pavilion, which has welcomed approximately 5,000 visitors per day, is "One Earth, One United Nations". The World Urban Campaign has also organized an inaugural lecture series at the exposition.

27. Both the exposition and the United Nations pavilion are dedicated to ideas, experiences, innovations, tools, technologies, know-how and forms of expression that portray a positive vision of an urbanizing world, which is also one of the key objectives of the World Urban Campaign.

III. Planning, managing and governing sustainable cities

28. Well-managed urbanization generates economic growth, social harmony, political advances and scientific progress while poorly managed urbanization

generates social exclusion, poverty, uncontrolled urban sprawl, pollution and unsustainable consumption of land, water and other natural resources.

29. As part of its efforts to promote sustainable urbanization and strengthen the role of local authorities during the reporting period, UN-Habitat focused on strengthening inclusive urban planning, management and governance, mainly through improved policies, strategies, legislation, institutions and implementation processes, in line with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/207. Substantive areas of focus included cities and climate change, as well as post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

A. Strengthening inclusive urban planning, management and governance

30. UN-Habitat has supported a number of country projects intended to improve policies, legislation and strategies supportive of inclusive urban planning, management and governance, including: local area development planning and provincial development strategy formulation for Basra, Iraq; formulation of city development strategies in the Great Lakes region of Africa; preparation of provincial and city development strategies in Quang Nam Province and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam; and development of a gender and security strategy for Kosovo.

31. During the reporting period, the Association of African Planning Schools, with support from UN-Habitat, developed a workplan in support of capacity development of urban planners in Africa, focusing on sustainable urbanization principles.

32. UN-Habitat-supported workshops on participatory budgeting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Senegal provide a good example of the kind of institutional capacity-building work carried out. The workshops targeted municipal officials in eight municipalities. All targeted municipalities are now piloting the participatory budgeting approach.

33. In Cuba, following support from UN-Habitat, the centre for regional training of Santa Clara city is now able to provide training and issue qualifications on environmental urban administration to professionals and technicians, as well as community leaders.

34. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat also provided support aimed at strengthening the role of local authorities in the implementation of inclusive urban planning, management and governance in a number of countries; work carried out in the Lake Victoria region illustrates this fact.

35. UN-Habitat supported eight demonstration projects in the Lake Victoria region, including on waste management (Kisumu and Homa Bay, Kenya), sanitation (Kampala and Kisumu), wetlands management (Musoma, United Republic of Tanzania), livelihoods, youth and gender empowerment (Entebbe and Jinja, Uganda) and infrastructure (Bukoba, United Republic of Tanzania). City development strategies have enabled city leaders to attract significant direct foreign investment into their cities and towns. For example, the Government of France invested 40 million euros for infrastructure, water and sanitation projects in Kisumu.

36. UN-Habitat also supported activities designed to enhance collaboration with and among associations of local authorities during the reporting period. In February 2009, UN-Habitat provided support for a meeting of mayors of African capitals and major cities. The meeting addressed the numerous challenges facing rapidly urbanizing cities.

B. Strengthening cities' mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change

37. In line with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/207 and resolution 22/3 of its Governing Council, UN-Habitat launched the Cities in Climate Change Initiative in 2009. The initiative works with a wide range of external and local partners to produce measurable results. Four pilot cities are included under the Initiative: Kampala, Maputo, Sorsogon City, the Philippines, and Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

38. Under the initiative, UN-Habitat has partnered with Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) to prepare a capacity-building tool on cities and carbon finance. It has also partnered with the International Institute for Environment and Development to prepare a tool for developing local climate change plans.

39. UN-Habitat, together with the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Cities Alliance developed an open source city-level greenhouse gas emission inventory standard, which was launched at the fifth session of the World Urban Forum. The standard is expected to harmonize the wide range of existing greenhouse gas emission inventory practices, thus contributing to better targeting and monitoring of city mitigation efforts.

40. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat, with support from leading climate change researchers from all over the world, initiated the preparation of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2011*, provisionally entitled *Cities and Climate Change*. The report will analyse mitigation and adaptation policies and practices at the city level.

C. Post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction and development

41. As the Inter-Agency Standing Committee focal point for housing, land and property, during the reporting period UN-Habitat focused on integrating a human settlements perspective into the earliest stages of emergency relief in order to ensure that key decisions can be made regarding land use, environmental issues, housing, infrastructure and livelihoods in order to facilitate transition to early recovery and reconstruction. In doing so, UN-Habitat collaborated with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Organization for Migration, as well as with non-governmental organizations, including the Emergency Architects Foundation, Oxfam and the Norwegian Refugee Council, as well as the private sector.

42. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to support activities in countries and regions both prone to and recovering from human-made and natural disasters. Projects in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, the Sudan, specifically Southern Sudan and Darfur, and Uganda have demonstrated that a human settlements perspective strengthens the transition between relief and development.

43. Within the framework of the World Urban Campaign, UN-Habitat continued to support the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and other partners in the global campaign "Making cities resilient", and to coordinate the development of normative products designed to assist partner cities in risk reduction and urban resilience programming.

44. Through projects in Haiti, Indonesia, Mozambique, Myanmar and the Philippines, UN-Habitat and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies continued to jointly address emergency shelter needs of populations affected by natural disasters, with UN-Habitat providing technical expertise to make the coordination role of the Federation more effective.

45. In Haiti, UN-Habitat has achieved several significant policy successes. It has contributed to the preparation of the inter-agency post-disaster needs assessment in two critical areas: developing the overall housing reconstruction strategy and the policy approach to land-related challenges. UN-Habitat has also successfully advocated the adoption of two important policy changes. The first, the prioritization of the policy of "safe-return", supports peoples' right to return to their homes if they are deemed habitable, instead of prioritizing the construction of new camps, in order to reduce the pressure on existing, overcrowded camps. This policy enables people to return home sooner and facilitates the early reconstruction of permanent shelter and more effective use of resources. The second important policy change was in the land sector. Whereas there was significant donor interest in promoting the development of a national land cadastre, UN-Habitat has successfully argued that the focus on a cadastre was premature and that immediate attention should rather be given to initiatives to promote security of tenure and facilitate housing reconstruction.

46. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, UN-Habitat supported families and communities affected by Typhoon Ketsana, which swept through the country's southern provinces in October 2009. UN-Habitat, through the Department of Public Works and Transport and the Lao Red Cross, purchased shelter-related equipment for close to 1,500 households and provided emergency assistance that benefited about 50,000 people through the resumption of safe water supply and sanitation services.

IV. Enhancing pro-poor land and housing policies and programmes

47. In response to paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/207, UN-Habitat carried out a number of activities to assist Governments to review their land and housing policies and to implement pro-poor land and housing programmes during the reporting period. This work focused on three dimensions: firstly,

implementing improved land and housing policies; secondly, increasing security of tenure; and, thirdly, promoting slum upgrading and prevention policies.

A. Implementing improved land and housing policies

48. Through its Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat has facilitated the establishment of an entity that includes most of the important actors in the land sector and has created a "brand" and credibility in the field internationally. In addition to its work in Haiti, where UN-Habitat has successfully influenced the overall housing reconstruction strategy and the policy approach to land-related challenges, the organization has been an active partner in a number of policy implementation processes at the country level linking its normative and operational strengths. During the reporting period, the Network increased the number of its partner organizations to 42, as compared to 33 in December 2008.

49. After the African Union adopted its land policy framework and guidelines in July 2009, UN-Habitat continuously supported the land policy initiative set up by a consortium consisting of the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. The initiative has focused on the development of land indicators and a tracking system to monitor progress in the implementation of the agreed land policy framework. UN-Habitat also continued to support the World Bank in the development of a land governance assessment framework, which will facilitate the assessment of land-related projects and interventions.

50. A number of projects to improve land and housing policies were implemented during the reporting period, with assistance from UN-Habitat, inter alia, in the following countries: Ghana, Nepal, Viet Nam, Malawi and Zambia (on preparation of urban housing sector profiles); Chad (on the development of a land and housing policy, which was adopted by Parliament in December 2009); Kenya (on its national land policy, approved by Parliament in December 2009); and Ecuador (on the country's housing policy and housing law).

B. Improving security of tenure

51. UN-Habitat can refer to several concrete country-level achievements in increasing security of tenure during the reporting period. Its normative and advocacy efforts to promote alternatives to forced evictions have become more structured, including through the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions and its partners.

52. During the reporting period, the Advisory Group presented recommendations to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat for action to prevent forced evictions in Istanbul, Turkey, New Orleans, United States, and Port Harcourt, Nigeria, as well as cities in south-eastern England.

53. UN-Habitat also co-organized two major regional training events. The first, the Islamic Land Law Regional Training, was successfully piloted in Malaysia in December 2009, ending with concrete action plans. The second, regional training on "Land and natural resources conflict" was held in Nairobi in May 2010, jointly organized with UNDP, UNEP, the Department of Political Affairs and the United

Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, with financial support from the European Commission.

54. UN-Habitat further provided support to a number of activities at the interregional and country levels. In Brazil, Ghana and Nepal, UN-Habitat, in close partnership with the Huairou Commission and grassroots organizations, pilot tested the "Gender evaluation criteria" tool. As a result of that work, the Government of Pernambuco, Brazil, decided not to evict an estimated 8,500 families in Recife, deciding, instead, to regularize them. This decision was announced during the fifth session of the World Urban Forum, amidst thunderous applause.

55. A number of projects on security of tenure were implemented, inter alia, in the following countries: Benin (on land registry development), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (on land-related conflicts), Ethiopia (involving studies on a massive land certification programme), the Sudan (on land registration), Afghanistan (involving registration of 12,425 plots), Pakistan (where 12,500 landless families were assisted) and Serbia (on the housing rights of the Roma).

C. Promoting slum upgrading and prevention policies

56. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat implemented a number of activities aimed at improving the living conditions of vulnerable urban populations and the urban poor, especially slum dwellers, as part of its ongoing contribution to the realization of the target of the Millennium Development Goals on improving the lives of slum-dwellers, and in line with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/207.

57. In order to contribute to the enhancement of the knowledge and capacity of Governments and Habitat Agenda partners in developing policies and strategies for slum upgrading and prevention, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the World Bank Institute, the Inter-American Development Bank, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the Cities Alliance took part in the implementation of a programme entitled "Successful approaches to national slum upgrading and prevention". The programme focused on the analysis of recent experiences and best practices of slum upgrading and prevention in 15 countries.

58. During the reporting period, implementation of the second phase of the participatory slum upgrading and prevention programme was initiated in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia.

59. Within the framework of the "One United Nations" programme in Rwanda, UN-Habitat promoted slum prevention and supported land-slide mitigation and reconstruction activities, including a resettlement and a reforestation programme implemented in partnership with the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority.

60. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the citywide action plan for the upgrading of unplanned and unserviced settlements in Dar-es-Salaam, whose preparation was supported by UN-Habitat, was officially presented to the Government and the Dar-es-Salaam city council at a forum for resource mobilization. UN-Habitat will provide assistance for the implementation of the action plan through 2020. With the World Bank, UN-Habitat supported the establishment of the Urban Sector Group in the country.

61. The "Urban partnerships for poverty reduction" project in Bangladesh, funded by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, is the largest urban poverty reduction initiative in the country, and one of the largest in the world. In cooperation with UNDP, UN-Habitat built on its community-centred methodology to support communities in preparing and managing community-contracts and implementing various settlement upgrading activities. Currently, communities in informal settlements in 17 towns and cities are implementing 565 community contracts valued at \$4.1 million.

62. In Mongolia, UN-Habitat coordinated a community-led ger-area upgrading project in Ulaanbaatar, funded by the Government of Japan (\$5.8 million) through UN-Habitat. The project, which works through community development councils, is the largest urban upgrading ever undertaken in the country, targeting 56,700 people from 12,185 households in five districts.

V. Developing environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services

63. The General Assembly, in its resolution 64/207, encouraged Governments to promote the principles and practice of sustainable urbanization in order, inter alia, to ensure access to basic services (see para. 4). In response, and as part of its ongoing contribution to the realization of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals on sustainable access to safe drinking water and safe sanitation, UN-Habitat focused on, firstly, assisting Governments to adopt enabling policy and institutional frameworks capable of expanding access to basic services; secondly, supporting Governments to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their water and sanitation institutions; and, thirdly, enhancing consumer demand for water and sanitation services.

A. Developing policy and institutional frameworks for expanded access to environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services

64. During the reporting period, the third report in the *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities* series, entitled *Solid Waste Management in the World's Cities*, was published by UN-Habitat. The publication includes profiles of urban solid waste and recycling systems in 20 cities as well as a comparative analysis of over 20 "reference cities"; a decision maker's guide to integrated sustainable waste management; outlines of available technologies, with guidance on selecting appropriate technologies; and a generic "assessment protocol" for assessing solid waste management issues in cities.

65. In Nairobi, on the occasion of World Water Day 2010, a joint publication of UNEP and UN-Habitat entitled *Sick water? The central role of wastewater management in sustainable development*, was launched. The publication advocates global action towards smart and sustained investment in improving wastewater management in order to address the effects of climate change on water resources.

66. The Global Water Operators Partnerships programme expanded its activities to South-Eastern Europe, where it has established a regional platform for water

operators that aims at implementing capacity-building interventions based on benchmarking and peer support.

67. UN-Habitat supported policy and institutional development activities in many countries in Africa and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. In Africa, projects were implemented in the following countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda and Zambia (on capacity strengthening of water utilities in water and sanitation planning); Ethiopia (on governance policy and a water demand management strategy in Dire Dawa); Mali (on development of 16 project proposals); Rwanda (on sustainable pro-poor urban water and sanitation management); and Burkina Faso (on a diagnostic study which lead to provision of 2 million euros by the European Union for water supply and sanitation facilities).

68. In Asia, UN-Habitat supported projects in India (on Madhya Pradesh's integrated urban sanitation programme); Nepal (on poverty mapping and pro-poor water and sanitation interventions); Viet Nam (on Cam Ranh's water demand management and tariff policies); and Cambodia (on pro-poor community-based water and sanitation in four towns, benefiting 29,682 people).

69. The following countries also received UN-Habitat's support during the reporting period: the Plurinational State of Bolivia (on development of policy directives and guidelines in sustainable sanitation); Colombia (on integration of water and sanitation master plans in slum upgrading); El Salvador (on improving water access in communities served by small scale water operators); Ecuador (on the formulation of a Water Law); Mexico (on the development of a proposal to secure a large loan for policy development and projects on water education and infrastructure upgrading in schools); and Nicaragua (on improving solid waste services through increased waste recovery and recycling).

B. Improving institutional efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of basic urban infrastructure and services

70. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat supported the implementation of initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of basic urban infrastructure service providers in all regions of the developing world, especially in the area of water supply and sanitation.

71. In Africa, projects were implemented in Ethiopia (in partnership with the African Development Bank, on a post-investment capacity-building programme in Harar); Kenya (on capacity improvement of the Kisumu Water Company); Rwanda (on capacity-building support to the Rwanda Water and Sanitation Corporation in implementing a low income household connection programme and a pre-paid water metering system); and the United Republic of Tanzania (on a pre-investment capacity-building programme for the Zanzibar Water Authority).

72. Countries that received support from UN-Habitat in Asia include: India (on pro-poor water and sanitation governance in four municipal corporations and two district urban development authorities); Indonesia (on a capacity-building programme on municipal solid waste management services in Aceh Province, in collaboration with UNDP); the Lao People's Democratic Republic (on improving the water delivery capacity of nine institutions and on a cost-recovery project); and

Viet Nam (on a cost-recovery project and on strengthening the capacity of one utility envisaged to benefit 31,360 people with improved access to water and 85,000 people with access to improved sanitation).

73. In Mexico, UN-Habitat worked with the Ministry of Social Development, the National Association of Water Utilities and the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Mexico in the development of a comprehensive online capacity-building diploma course for water operators.

C. Enhancing consumer demand for efficient and environmentally sustainable basic urban infrastructure and services

74. Under the Global Water Operators' Partnership, the Geo-Referenced Utilities Benchmarking System, an enhanced platform for benchmarking the performance of utilities, was put online during the reporting period. The system, which targets a wide audience of decision makers, utilities and other users helps improve transparency, awareness raising and consumer demand.

75. Several projects were supported by UN-Habitat in Africa during the reporting period, including in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, and on the formulation of a large Global Environmental Facility project called "Promoting energy efficiency in buildings in East Africa", which included awareness-raising workshops.

76. In Asia, projects were supported in India (on rain harvesting in 16 schools and treatment and reuse of waste water in Madhya Pradesh, benefiting 23,000 people); Indonesia (on municipal management of solid waste services in Aceh Province); Myanmar (on post-disaster support in restoring damaged and destroyed water and sanitation infrastructure through 900 community contracts); and Nepal (on training of 14 water users committees in small towns).

77. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat supported projects in Cuba, on the project "Water for life" in Santa Clara city, in which 700 residents were connected to water, and in Mexico, where social monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation service delivery was initiated through the establishment of six water and sanitation citizen observatories.

VI. Improving human settlements finance systems

78. The General Assembly, in its resolution 64/207, invited the international donor community and financial institutions to contribute generously to the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, including the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and technical cooperation trust funds (para. 8), and also invited them to contribute to the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations Trust Fund (para. 9).

79. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat's activities in this area focused on improving the mobilization of funds for investment in affordable social housing and related infrastructure. UN-Habitat continued to develop its catalytic role in facilitating cooperation between domestic banks, local authorities and urban poor organizations to mobilize and package domestic capital, public investment and

community savings for practical slum upgrading activities. The experimental reimbursable seeding operations revolving loan programme emerged as an effective tool for reaching underserved populations, from the thirtieth down to the eighty-fifth income percentiles, with the local finance facility approach (under the Slum Upgrading Facility) reaching populations from the seventieth income percentile to the bottom of the income pyramid.

A. Slum Upgrading Facility

80. A total of \$1,780,000 had been disbursed to five local finance facilities by the end of December 2009. By the end of May 2010, a total of \$3,374,084 had been disbursed for development and assistance to local finance facilities as well as for credit enhancement for project implementation.

81. A pipeline of over 40 small and medium scale credit enhancement project proposals, with a value of over \$19 million, were reviewed and showed potential leverage of 3 to 1 for credit enhancement funds. For the five current active projects (2 in Ghana, 2 in Sri Lanka and 1 in Indonesia), just over \$1 million in project value had been leveraged by mid-2010. By the same date, these projects had reached a total of 168 households (11 in Indonesia, 51 in Sri Lanka and 104 in Ghana) in a combination of progressive upgrading projects that included the building of new homes as well as of commercial market stalls and shops.

B. Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations Trust Fund

82. During the reporting period, the experimental reimbursable seeding operations revolving loan programme worked with local banks, microfinance institutions and international financial institutions in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Nicaragua, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Palestine.

83. In its efforts to mobilize financial resources for pro-poor investment in shelter, UN-Habitat worked with a number of key partners, including the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the International Finance Corporation, the Middle East Investment Initiative, the World Bank, the Palestine Investment Fund, the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF International), HSBC, Azania Bank in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Development Finance Company of Uganda, the Lao Development Bank, the Palestine Capital Markets Authority, the Bank of Palestine, the Cairo Amman Bank and a range of domestic banks in Ghana, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

84. During the reporting period, five loan transactions for seeding operations were completed covering: the United Republic of Tanzania (\$500,000); Uganda (\$500,000); Nepal (\$250,000); Nicaragua (\$500,000) and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (\$1,000,000). Total funds disbursed by mid-2010 amounted to \$2,750,000. Investment of the funds is expected to result in the construction of new affordable housing units in Palestine, the creation of serviced plots in the United Republic of Tanzania, new and upgraded homes for the poor in Uganda, secondary lending for housing microfinance loans through microfinance institutions in Nicaragua and credit extension to save-and-build credit cooperatives in Nepal. Projects being developed through partnerships and with technical assistance and

credit enhancement from local finance facilities are expected to reach over 10,000 households by 2014.

85. A partnership between UN-Habitat and the International Finance Corporation was also initiated in order to support domestic banks in the development of a mortgage product to promote the establishment of a sustainable housing finance market in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Discussions continued in Thailand, countries of the Caribbean, Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Kenya, among others, for further opportunities that will contribute to that end.

VII. Governance reform and excellence in management

86. During the reporting period, a review of the governance of UN-Habitat was initiated, in line with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 64/207 and UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 22/5. UN-Habitat continued implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan 2008-2013. Also in line with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 64/207, activities under focus area 6 of the plan, "excellence in management", focused on: empowering staff to achieve the goals of the plan; institutional alignment in order to more effectively deliver planned results; application of results-based management principles; and mobilization of sufficient financial resources and their effective use to achieve the results set out in the plan, in line with paragraph 8 of resolution 64/207.

A. Progress in institutional reform and alignment

87. During the reporting period, a joint review of UN-Habitat's governance structure by its Committee of Permanent Representatives and its secretariat was initiated. The review aims at developing a better functioning governance structure for UN-Habitat by identifying and implementing strategies that will improve its transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. The first phase of the assessment, which involved the identification of specific quick-wins and short-term improvements, has been completed.

88. Horizontal coordination among UN-Habitat's divisions in the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan 2008-2013, through the biennial work programme, was also enhanced. For that purpose, the existing task forces for the plan were reconstituted into seven focus area teams, one for each of its six focus areas and another for coordinating normative and operational work, including at the country level. Detailed focus area policy and strategy papers were also finalized and are serving as the guiding instruments for coordination and implementation.

B. Empowering staff to achieve planned results

89. A staff skills inventory database was developed during the reporting period and is currently being utilized to collate and assess the skills available within the organization. A training survey was also completed in collaboration with the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Current organization-wide training needs were compiled and a mandatory training programme developed.

90. Job descriptions for 93 per cent of UN-Habitat's posts were reviewed and classified in order to align them with the medium-term strategic and institutional plan 2008-2013. This also involved reviewing the skills of the incumbents. In addition, all vacant posts up for advertisement are now routinely screened to ensure compliance with the plan.

91. A recently completed job description database, which contains information on generic and specific job descriptions, post classification documents and post validation, facilitated the preparation of vacancy announcements, resulting in faster recruitment during the reporting period. Recruitment days, through Galaxy, were reduced to 178, compared to 265 days in 2008.

92. To further improve organization-wide performance, and as a follow-up to the staff survey conducted in October 2009, a review of the current staff performance appraisal process was initiated and a road map developed to address identified weaknesses and promote strengths identified.

93. Improvements in a number of business processes, in addition to staff recruitment, were also achieved during the reporting period. The average procurement time for information technology equipment was reduced to 50 days by the end of May 2010, down from 67 days at the end of 2009. For the same period, the average time for approval of cooperation agreements declined from 11.6 to 10.4 days.

94. During the reporting period, a process was initiated to increase the delegation of management authority. Authority on overtime management, budgeting and resources management, project approval (of up to \$100,000.00 in value) and mission travel was delegated to division directors, facilitating direct responsibility and accountability in these areas and reducing the steps in the respective approval processes.

95. Participatory and transparent programme planning, as well as budgeting and resource allocation processes, were also adopted in support of results-based management. New guidelines on travel planning and approval procedures were finalized, a new roster for consultants was designed and launched, in order to improve the recruitment of consultants, and an updated field operations manual was launched.

C. Enhancing application of results-based management principles

96. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat aimed at improving the percentage of programmes and projects contributing to the goals of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan in order to further align the biennial strategic framework and work programme with the plan.

97. A biennial strategic framework (for 2012-2013) that is fully aligned to the results framework of the plan was developed and endorsed by both the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Committee for Programme and Coordination. A draft results-based management orientation manual set of guidelines was also prepared.

98. A revised project review and approval process, which facilitates project approval at the division level and in regional offices, was also adopted. A dedicated

secretary to the Programme Review Committee was appointed in order to improve the operations of the Committee both at headquarters and in the regional offices, in particular the quality of project briefs and project documents.

99. Staff training in the area of results-based management was also initiated during the reporting period. This included a two-day retreat and capacity-building workshop for the members of the Programme Review Committee; two externally facilitated one-day workshops on results-based management, attended by 36 human settlements officers and programme management officers; and a two-day capacity-building workshop in project management, attended by 24 staff members.

100. A knowledge management strategy to support results-based management was completed during the reporting period. The strategy has two main objectives: to improve knowledge management and knowledge sharing within the agency; and to position UN-Habitat as the first port of call and the premier global reference centre on knowledge about sustainable urbanization.

101. Two strategic evaluations of the Global Land Tool Network and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund programmes in Nepal and Kenya were completed during the reporting period as part of ongoing efforts to mainstream results-based management. In addition, a thematic study on gender mainstreaming in UN-Habitat's water and sanitation programmes and an external evaluation of the "Safer Cities" programme in the United Republic of Tanzania were also completed.

D. Enhancing financial resources for the delivery of goals of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan

102. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat sought to achieve resource mobilization targets set for non-earmarked and earmarked funding, as well as to improve the percentage of both earmarked and non-earmarked resources allocated to the priority focus areas of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

103. For non-earmarked funds, \$20 million was received in 2009, representing 93 per cent of the set target. For earmarked resources, \$126.2 million was received in 2009, representing 127 per cent of the target. For the 2010-2011 biennium, 95 per cent of both the earmarked and non-earmarked resources were allocated to priority focus areas of the plan, exceeding the respective targets of 61 and 80 per cent.

104. New multi-year agreements were negotiated and signed with the Governments of Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, thus establishing longer term commitments from key strategic partners. A database of pipeline projects was developed and a comprehensive resource mobilization action plan for 2010-2013 formulated. In addition, a development partners' breakfast was convened in Rio de Janeiro during the fifth session of the World Urban Forum as part of UN-Habitat's resource mobilization efforts. The event attracted the largest representation from major donor and potential donor countries ever achieved by UN-Habitat.

105. During the reporting period, a new mechanism to facilitate increased transparency in resource allocation was also initiated. This entailed allocation and decentralization of core fund resources to the divisions, as part of the delegation of authority process. Another new and transparent mechanism for the allocation of resources for the plan was put in place in December 2009, with a special committee

being set to review proposals based on criteria set by the Steering Committee for the plan.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

106. The challenges that cities are facing today, and will continue to face in the next few decades, are multifaceted. They include rapid and often chaotic urbanization, climate change, the global economic crisis and globalization, increasing social fragmentation and intra-city inequality, the geographical expansion of cities into huge megalopolises and the changing scale and complexity of urban governance.

107. Cities in developing countries, where the majority of the population will live after 2025, must learn how to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change while also meeting serious urban deficits in drinking water supply and sanitation. They will have to focus on how to strengthen their role as engines of national economic growth and pay greater attention to the existing social problems of poverty and exclusion, whose most visible manifestation is the existence of slums. Only a sustainable development approach can simultaneously address these environmental, economic and social problems. Given that the population balance is tilting fast towards urban areas, sustainable development is increasingly becoming synonymous with sustainable urbanization.

108. Over the last two decades, UN-Habitat has contributed progressively to improving the living environment, in line with the Habitat Agenda and within the context of chapter 7 of Agenda 21. This work has focused on assisting Governments and local authorities in providing adequate shelter for all; promoting sustainable urban development, including sustainable land use planning and management; integrated provision of water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management; promoting sustainable energy and transport; promoting human settlements planning and management in disaster-prone areas; promoting sustainable construction industry activities, including more appropriate building codes; and developing the capacity of local authorities.

109. The fundamental questions regarding the role of cities in climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as access to adequate housing, serviced land and basic urban services such as water and sanitation need to be addressed and incorporated into international, national and local responses if sustainable forms of urban development are to be attained in the developing world. **In light of the above, it is important that Member States recognize UN-Habitat's expertise and contribution to the 20-year review process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the preparatory processes for the conference.**

110. In more recent years, UN-Habitat has sought to find ways of addressing many of the above-mentioned issues through slum upgrading with impact at scale and innovative ways of financing human settlements development projects, including through the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. In the coming years, it is important that the resource base of UN-Habitat be strengthened, including through broadening of its donor base, in line with the resolutions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and General Assembly. **Governments in a position to do so and other public and private entities are therefore encouraged to contribute to**

the further capitalization of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation so as to enable UN-Habitat to provide more financial and seed capital support for slum upgrading and prevention, as well for pro-poor investment in urban water supply and sanitation.

111. Finally, it is important that Governments reassess progress made on adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, as well as the role of UN-Habitat, in light of the emerging urban challenges. The convening of a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016 would thus be timely.



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**Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation
of human rights instruments**

Evaluation of the use of additional meeting time by the human rights treaty bodies

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the General Assembly a report prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Assembly resolutions 63/243 and 63/244 and containing an evaluation of the use of additional meeting time by the human rights treaty bodies, taking into account a more comprehensive approach to the backlog of treaty bodies and the increasing number of reports of States parties to the human rights conventions.

* A/65/150.



Report prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights containing an evaluation of the use of additional meeting time by the human rights treaty bodies, taking into account a more comprehensive approach to the backlog of treaty bodies and the increasing number of reports of States parties to the human rights conventions

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 63/243 and 63/244, by which the Assembly decided to assess the situation regarding the meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its sixty-fifth session on the basis of an evaluation made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, taking into account a more comprehensive approach to the backlog of human rights treaty bodies and the increasing number of reports of States parties to the human rights conventions (resolution 63/243, para. 14, and resolution 63/244, para. 3). The report provides information on the utilization by both Committees of the additional meeting time approved, and places their efforts in the context of the increasing workload faced by the human rights treaty body system as a whole.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolutions 63/243 and 63/244, the General Assembly, in view of the backlog of reports of States parties awaiting consideration under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, respectively, authorized additional meeting time for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (see sect. II below). The General Assembly decided to assess the situation regarding the meeting time of the two Committees at its sixty-fifth session on the basis of an evaluation made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), taking into account a more comprehensive approach to the backlog of human rights treaty bodies and the increasing number of reports of States parties to the human rights conventions.

2. In response to those requests by the General Assembly, an evaluation of the use of the approved additional meeting time by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child was made by OHCHR, within the context of the increasing workload faced by the human rights treaty body system as a whole. The evaluation is presented to the General Assembly for its consideration in the present report.

II. Additional meeting time granted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child by resolutions 63/243 and 63/244

A. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

3. At its seventy-third session, held from 28 July to 15 August 2008, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern at the persisting backlog of reports awaiting consideration. In the light of the fact that its total annual meeting time was limited to six weeks, the Committee felt constrained in its efforts to consider the periodic reports of State parties in a timely manner. Consequently, the Committee requested the General Assembly to approve one additional week of meeting time per session as of 2010.¹

4. The request was favourably received by the General Assembly, which, by its resolution 63/243, authorized the Committee to meet for one additional week per session, with effect from August 2009, until 2011. Accordingly, since its seventy-fifth session, held in August 2009, the Committee has met for four weeks during each of its two annual sessions.

5. Previously, during its normal three-week sessions, the Committee had considered an average of 8 State party reports per session, or 16 reports per year. The additional meeting time granted to the Committee since August 2009 has enabled it to consider State party reports at a rate of 11 per session, or 22 per year. Eleven States parties are thus scheduled for consideration during the Committee's seventy-seventh session (which was under way at the time of reporting) and during its seventy-eighth session, scheduled for early 2011.

¹ A/63/18, para. 558.

6. The additional meeting time has allowed the Committee to reduce the backlog of reports pending consideration. At the time of the adoption of resolution 63/243 (December 2008), the Committee was facing a backlog of 29 reports. As at 5 August 2010, 21 State party reports were pending consideration and scheduled for 2011. However, if the Committee continues to receive 18 reports and to examine 16 reports on average per year, a backlog will begin to accumulate again immediately.

7. The Committee faces a heavier workload in part because of the success of its efforts to engage with non-reporting States parties. Currently, 48 States parties are at least 5 years late in the submission of their reports, and the reports of 23 of them are overdue by at least 10 years. At its seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions, the Committee decided to postpone the review of the implementation of the Convention in the six countries with extremely overdue reports selected for review at those sessions, in the light of commitments received from them to finalize their reports in the near future. Of those six States parties, four had submitted their reports by 5 August 2010.

B. Committee on the Rights of the Child

8. The persistent backlog of State party reports pending consideration has been among the principal challenges faced by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in recent years. Despite efforts to consider more reports per session, the backlog has continued to increase, owing in particular to the large number of initial reports under the two Optional Protocols to the Convention, on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. States parties must submit one separate initial report under the Optional Protocols, and thereafter incorporate information on the implementation of the Protocols in their periodic reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The surge in the workload in recent years is therefore expected to be temporary. However, although the surge will eventually subside, the large number of States parties to the Convention (193) and the high level of advocacy undertaken in connection with the Convention mean that the Committee will have a consistently heavy workload.

9. By its decision of 6 June 2008,² the Committee on the Rights of the Child requested the General Assembly to authorize it to meet for an additional 12 weeks (8 additional weeks of sessional meetings and 4 weeks of pre-sessional working group meetings), between October 2009 and January 2011.

10. By its resolution 63/244, the General Assembly granted the request for additional meeting time to allow the Committee to consider reports in two parallel chambers for 10 working days of each of its three regular sessions and the five working days of each of its three pre-sessional working group meetings between October 2009 and October 2010, for the purposes of considering the reports of the States parties submitted under the two Optional Protocols.

11. The General Assembly had previously granted a similar request in its resolution 59/261, in which it had welcomed the proposal of the Committee to work in two chambers, as an exceptional and temporary measure, for a period of two years, starting with its thirty-eighth session in January 2005, in order to clear the

² A/63/160, annex.

backlog of reports.³ At the request of the General Assembly, the Committee provided an assessment of progress made after those two years, taking into account the wider context of treaty body reform, in an oral statement made by its Chair to the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

12. In his statement, made on 12 October 2006, the Chair highlighted the fact that the Committee had been able to consider a total of 48 reports during its three sessions held in two chambers in 2006, compared with 27 reports in 2005. The Committee had thus been able to reduce the backlog from 58 to 24 reports. In his statement, the Chair also drew attention to the fact that the processing of documents had proved to be a challenge, as the document services had been overwhelmed with the additional documents that had had to be processed for the sessions during which the Committee had convened in two chambers. He pointed out that the issue was a serious one that required careful scrutiny and that, were the Committee to resume its work in two chambers, the relevant services would have to be adequately equipped to handle the increased workload (see A/C.3/61/SR.15).

13. In December 2008, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/244, the Committee was faced with a backlog of more than 80 reports, including initial reports under the two Optional Protocols. During the two sessions held thus far in parallel chambers pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/244 (the fifty-third session, held in January 2010, and the fifty-fourth session, held in May 2010), the Committee considered a total of 34 reports, while another 18 reports are scheduled for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, to be held in September 2010. The Committee will thus have considered a total of 52 reports in parallel chambers (23 under the Convention, 14 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 15 under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict) in 2010, compared with a total of 30 reports in 2009 (17 under the Convention, 6 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 7 under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict).

14. As at 5 August 2010, aside from the 18 reports scheduled for consideration during the upcoming fifty-fifth session (13 September to 1 October 2010), a total of 82 State party reports were pending consideration (50 under the Convention, 17 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 15 under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict). Of those, 37 had been scheduled for consideration at the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions (February and May 2011) (15 under the Convention, 12 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 10 under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict). In view of the continued high rate of report submission, the additional time gained by meeting in two chambers can be said to have enabled the Committee to avoid a further increase in the backlog, rather than to achieve a reduction.

15. On the basis of the estimate that the Committee considers an average of 10 reports during a regular session, it would take approximately eight sessions (nearly three years) to consider the reports which are currently pending. If the Committee were to meet in two chambers, at an average of 18 reports per session, the

³ The relevant decision of the Committee is included in its report to the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly (A/59/41/Corr.1 and Add.1).

Committee would be able to consider the same number of reports in approximately four and a half sessions (one and a half years).

III. Increasing workload faced by the human rights treaty body system as a whole

16. The requests for additional meeting time for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child reflect the general trend of an increasing workload in keeping with the growing number of States parties to the eight core international human rights treaties with reporting obligations that are currently in force. The present section provides a brief overview of some of the challenges faced by other treaty bodies relating to their allotted meeting time. An overview of the current annual meeting time of each Committee is provided in the annex to the present report.

A. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

17. In recent years, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has faced a persistent backlog of reports awaiting consideration (on average, approximately 25 reports). In 1999, the Economic and Social Council endorsed, through its decision 1999/287, the recommendation of the Committee that two extraordinary sessions and two week-long meetings of its pre-sessional working group be held. Convened in 2000 and 2001, the extraordinary sessions helped to substantially reduce the backlog then facing the Committee. However, given that about 12 reports are received on average each year, a backlog has since built up again, totalling 35 reports at present.

18. At its forty-first session, in November 2008, the Committee expressed concern about its ability to consider the reports of State parties in a timely manner and without undue delay. At its forty-second session, in May 2009, the Committee requested the Economic and Social Council to approve an additional session per year during the period 2010-2011.⁴ As the request was not acted upon during the Council session held in July 2009, the Committee, at its forty-third session in November 2009, reiterated its request in the form of a draft decision to be adopted by the Council.⁵ The request is for one additional session per year during the period 2011-2012, each followed by a pre-sessional working group of one week's duration.

B. Human Rights Committee

19. The Human Rights Committee monitors compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in three annual sessions of three weeks' duration each. The sessions are preceded by a one-week meeting of the Working Group on Communications, which examines complaints received under the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant. The Committee considers four or five State party reports per session, averaging 13 reports per year. In the period from August 2009 to July 2010, it received 11 reports and, as at July 2010, 24 State party reports were

⁴ E/2009/22-E/C.12/2008/3, para. 559.

⁵ E/2010/22-E/C.12/2009/3, para. 4.

pending consideration. To date, the Committee has not requested additional meeting time for the consideration of reports. In order to improve its effectiveness, the Committee adopted a new, optional reporting procedure whereby it would send States parties a tailored list of issues, the replies to which would serve as their reports ("list of issues prior to reporting"). The expectation is that the new procedure will help streamline the reporting process and focus it on the critical issues for individual State parties. The Committee will begin implementing the new procedure in November 2010.

20. With respect to its work under the Optional Protocol, the Committee faces a constantly growing caseload. During recent years, the backlog of pending communications has grown steadily, rising from 222 from year-end 2001 to 398 in August 2010. On one occasion, in order to address its backlog of pending cases, the Committee requested additional meeting time. At its 2194th meeting, held on 2 April 2004, the Committee changed the week-long meeting of its Working Group on Communications of the eighty-first session into a week of plenary meetings; held from 5 to 9 July 2004, to consider and adopt views.⁶

C. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

21. Article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women specifies that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women "shall normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention". In 1995, the General Assembly took note of the increasing workload of the Committee and adopted resolution 50/202, in which it took note with approval of a proposed amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention which would allow for more flexibility in ensuring adequate meeting time for the Committee to carry out its work.⁷ As at 5 August 2010, only 57 States parties of the two-thirds majority of 124 needed for the amendment to enter into force had deposited with the Secretary-General their instruments of acceptance of the amendment.

22. In its decision 37/I, adopted in 2007, the Committee concluded that its workload, together with its other responsibilities under the Convention and those under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, made it necessary that the Committee be provided with the opportunity to hold three sessions per annum, of which at least one would meet in parallel chambers.⁸

23. In its resolution 62/218, the General Assembly strongly urged States parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures so that acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention by the required two-thirds majority of States parties could be reached as soon as possible and the amendment could enter into force. Until such time, and in order to allow the Committee to clear its backlog,

⁶ A/59/40 (vol. I), annex VI.

⁷ The amendment would replace article 20, paragraph 1, with the following text: "The Committee shall normally meet annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention. The duration of the meetings of the Committee shall be determined by a meeting of the States parties to the present Convention, subject to the approval of the General Assembly."

⁸ A/62/38, part three, chap. I.

the General Assembly, in the same resolution, authorized the Committee to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a one-week pre-session working group for each session, for an interim period effective from January 2010, pending the entry into force of the amendment.

24. Also by resolution 62/218, the General Assembly approved the request of the Committee relating to meeting time in the biennium 2008-2009. Additional meeting time had been granted by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/230 for the period 2006-2007. Thus, the Committee held 11 sessions of three weeks each during the period 2006-2009, each accompanied by a one-week pre-session working group. The Committee met in parallel chambers during 6 of those 11 sessions. The extended meeting time enabled it to consider 146 reports and to reduce the backlog of reports such that today, with the continued holding of three annual sessions, the Committee is largely able to consider reports at a pace consistent with the rate of submission. At present, 34 reports are awaiting consideration by the Committee. Of those, 26 have been scheduled for consideration in the period from October 2010 to July 2011.

25. In addition to reducing the backlog of reports awaiting review, the additional meeting time has allowed the Committee to monitor the implementation of the Convention in States parties with long-overdue reports. To that end, the Committee has requested 20 States parties with long-overdue initial reports to submit reports by a specific date. In the event that a report is not received by that deadline, the Committee will proceed to consider the implementation of the Convention in the State party concerned. As a result, seven States parties with long-overdue reports have submitted them, and four have informed the Secretariat that the reports are in the final drafting stage.

26. In its resolution 62/218, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to hold three annual sessions of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Since its inception, the Working Group has held 17 sessions and registered 25 communications; the Committee has completed the proceedings related to 14 of those communications. The Committee also continued to implement its mandate under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. To date, the Committee has concluded one inquiry under this procedure (Mexico), while another is currently under way.

D. Committee against Torture

27. At its forty-first session, in November 2008, the Committee against Torture, which normally meets for two annual sessions of three weeks' duration each, requested the General Assembly to provide appropriate financial support to enable it to meet for an additional session of four weeks in 2010 and 2011 in order to ensure the effective implementation of the new, optional procedure of adopting a list of issues on the basis of which reports may be prepared ("list of issues prior to reporting"), which was introduced by the Committee in May 2007.⁹ The request was not acted upon by the General Assembly.

28. At its forty-fourth session, held from 26 April to 14 May 2010, the Committee decided to renew its request to the General Assembly for additional meeting time. It requested one additional week of meeting time per session for 2011 and 2012.

⁹ A/64/44, paras. 21 and 22.

29. Those requests were motivated by an increased workload resulting from the new procedure to offer a list of issues prior to reporting. Of the States parties that were due to submit reports in 2009 and are due to submit reports in 2010 and 2011, 38 decided to avail themselves of the new procedure, which is expected to improve compliance with reporting obligations, thus increasing the number of reports pending consideration, which currently stands at 23.

30. Under the individual complaints procedure, approximately 100 cases are pending examination by the Committee. At the present rate of 10 to 12 cases considered per session, the backlog would take five years to eliminate, not counting any new cases received in the meantime. It is estimated that the additional meeting time could allow the Committee to deal with up to 16 additional reports and 16 additional individual communications during the period 2011-2012.

E. Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers

31. The Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers has so far been able to keep up with the consideration of State party reports within its current meeting time of three weeks per year. The Committee considered five State party reports in 2009 and will consider a total of four reports in 2010. Seven reports are currently pending consideration, of which three are scheduled to be considered at the thirteenth session, in November 2010, and four are scheduled to be considered at the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions, to be held in 2011. The number of States parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has been increasing steadily, albeit at a slow pace, and currently stands at 43. With the entry into force of the Convention for the forty-first State party on 1 November 2009, the membership of the Committee increased from 10 to 14, in accordance with article 72, paragraph 1 (b), of the Convention, effective as of January 2010.

F. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

32. Following the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the eightieth State party on 2 February 2010 and in accordance with article 34, paragraph 2, of the Convention, the membership of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will increase from the current 12 to 18 members as at 1 January 2011. The Committee currently meets for two one-week sessions a year. As at 5 August 2010, three State party reports were before it and pending consideration. The Committee will consider the first report at its fourth session, in October 2010.

33. Because of the rapid pace of ratification, the growing number of reports due and the complaints and inquiries that accompany ratification, the Committee will require additional meeting time in the near future. Under the current meeting arrangements, if only half of the 76 initial State party reports that are due by the end of 2011 are submitted, the Committee will end the year with a substantial backlog of reports.

G. Committee on Enforced Disappearances

34. A tenth treaty body, namely, a Committee to monitor the implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, is expected to be established in the near future, as the Convention needs only two additional ratifications to enter into force. In accordance with article 26 of the Convention, the Committee will be composed of 10 experts. In addition to monitoring the implementation of the Convention by examining State party reports, the Committee will receive individual communications under the procedure set out in article 31 of the Convention for those States that have accepted the competence of the Committee to do so, as well as requests for urgent action from relatives or legal representatives of disappeared persons.

H. Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture

35. Following the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the fiftieth State party in September 2009, the number of the members of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture will increase from 10 to 25 in February 2011, pursuant to article 5 of the Optional Protocol. Unlike the other treaty bodies, the Subcommittee does not consider State party reports.

36. The current meeting time (three weeks per year) was deemed adequate for the initial stages of the work of the Subcommittee, during which it was concentrating on establishing its working methods and rules of procedure and was conducting inquiries with regard to a smaller number of States parties. However, three working weeks per year will not be sufficient for the Subcommittee to efficiently fulfil its mandate now that there are 50 States parties and given that the membership of the Subcommittee will expand to 25 in February 2011. A greater number of States parties implies a greater number of missions and a greater number of pre- and post-mission meetings of the Subcommittee with the States concerned. A greater number of missions will require the preparation of more mission reports, which in turn will require more meeting time for discussion and approval by the Subcommittee. In addition, an increase in the number of States parties implies more work with national preventive mechanisms, thus requiring additional meeting time. Owing to its limited budgetary resources, the Subcommittee has not yet been able to officially undertake visits to advise national preventive mechanisms, as mandated under article 11 (b) of the Optional Protocol.

IV. Conclusion

37. Requests for additional meeting time are symptomatic of the increasing workload faced by the human rights treaty body system as a whole. Resource requirements to enable the human rights treaty bodies to effectively carry out their mandates are increasing as a consequence of the continued establishment of new human rights treaty bodies and the increasing numbers of ratifications, submissions of State party reports, submissions of individual complaints and initiations of inquiries, as well as of the increase in the deliberation time needed when there is an expansion in the membership of a treaty body. If they are not accorded adequate

meeting time, the treaty bodies will be unable to ensure the timely consideration of State party reports and communications received under the complaint procedures, which would have serious consequences for the effectiveness and credibility of the human rights treaty monitoring system. The backlogs faced by some treaty bodies have been so extensive as to delay the consideration of a State party report until three years after its submission, by which time the information is so outdated that supplementary information amounting to the equivalent of a new report has to be requested.

38. Adequate meeting time is thus necessary to allow the treaty bodies to carry out their mandate in an effective and timely manner. However, the treaty bodies will be able to make effective use of the additional meeting time only if it is accompanied by adequate secretariat support. When a backlog of pending reports is being addressed, additional meetings will be effective only if sufficient staff members are available to conduct background research, organize meetings, facilitate the participation of the relevant national and international actors and assist the Committee with the multitude of other tasks associated with its sessions. For example, the authorization of additional meeting time for a Committee to consider 20 more State party reports in one year would require approximately 600 additional Committee secretariat working days, which would translate to almost one year of service on the part of three additional staff members.¹⁰ Experience has also shown that, if effective use is to be made of any additional meeting time approved, the United Nations conference services, especially those processing documentation, will need to be adequately resourced in order to process the additional documents needed for the expanded treaty body sessions. Prior to the recent increase in treaty body activities, certain documents, such as submissions from States parties in response to requests for additional information, which are critical to an informative dialogue between the treaty bodies and States parties, were processed on an "as available" basis. Such documents are no longer being processed, owing to the lack of available capacity.

39. With limited resources focused on addressing backlogs and the rate of increase in pending cases and State party reports, the treaty bodies have little or no time left to dedicate to other important aspects of their work. For example, a lack of meeting time has prevented some Committees from discussing in depth possible improvements to their methods of work or questions of harmonization of approach across all the treaty bodies on a range of issues, such as their procedures for dealing with long-overdue reports or the follow-up to concluding observations. The lack of meeting time also hampers the ability of Committees to examine substantive issues, such as general comments, through which they provide guidance as to the nature and scope of specific treaty provisions or the application of the treaties to specific groups, issues and situations. Lack of meeting time also affects the ability of the treaty bodies to engage with partners, who often request time for interaction with the treaty bodies.

40. In addition to requesting extra meeting time, the treaty bodies are taking various measures to ensure that the best possible use is made of the meeting time available to them. In particular, all treaty bodies are engaged in efforts to improve and harmonize working methods, including through annual inter-Committee

¹⁰ Based on a rough estimate of 30 working days required for preparations by the secretariat for a dialogue with each State party, which is the average across the treaty bodies.

meetings and meetings of the Chairs. Most Committees already make full use of lunch hours by scheduling various meetings and briefings, and some work on weekends owing to the insufficient amount of official meeting time. Several Committees have decided to streamline and better focus the reporting process relating to the key issues by adopting lists of issues prior to reporting. In addition, over the past 10 years, most treaty bodies have formally adopted rules permitting the submission of multiple reports in a single document.

41. During sessions of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly in 2009, the High Commissioner for Human Rights called upon States parties, members of the treaty bodies, and other stakeholders to initiate a process of reflection on how to further streamline and strengthen the treaty body system. In the context of meeting time management, stakeholders could reflect on innovative ways for the treaty bodies to make optimal use of official meeting time in the performance of their functions without compromising the quality of their work.

42. The treaty monitoring system is currently able to function, but it is suffering as a result of its own success. With the exception of the optional protocols and the newer treaties, most of the human rights treaties establishing a monitoring body have achieved near-universal ratification. The High Commissioner for Human Rights is committed to promoting universal ratification and full compliance with the treaties, both in form and in substance. However, as the treaty system becomes better known and compliance by States parties with their reporting obligations improves, the time and resource constraints facing the treaty system can be expected to continue to increase.

43. Recent years have seen significantly improved compliance by States parties with their reporting obligations. The reasons may include the continuous efforts of the growing number of OHCHR field presences encouraging treaty reporting, the enhanced responsiveness of States parties with long-overdue reports to the review procedures adopted by most treaty bodies, and greater awareness in general of the treaty system than was the case years ago. The most direct reason, however, may be the attention accorded to the reporting record of all States under the universal periodic review procedure of the Human Rights Council. Since the procedure was launched, OHCHR has recorded an increase in the rate of the submission of reports, and although the extent to which this is directly attributable to the universal periodic review procedure has not been measured with precision, the trend is expected to continue.

44. Notwithstanding such improved compliance, the present system is able to function only because there remains a significant level of non-compliance. If all State party reports were submitted on time, most treaty bodies would need to at least double their current meeting time for the examination of reports in order to keep pace, and some would need to triple it.

45. A long-term solution must be found based on a comprehensive study of the resource requirements of the treaty bodies, especially with regard to meeting time, staffing levels, conference facilities and documentation.

Annual workload and meeting time of the treaty bodies (2010 figures)

Treaty body	States parties	Number of members	Number of sessions per year	Number of weeks of meeting time per year (session/working group)	Number of reports examined on average per year	Number of reports considered annually if all States considered	Number of reports pending consideration (as at 5 August 2010)	Petitions procedure	List of issues	Additional meeting time requested	Additional meeting time authorized
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	160	18	2	6/2	10	32	35	Yes (when the number of ratifications of the Optional Protocol reaches 10)	Yes	E/2010/22-E/C.12/2009/3, para. 4: 3 weeks/year (sessions) and 1 week/year (pre-sessional working group meetings) in 2011 and 2012	
Human Rights Committee	166	18	3	9/3	15	33	24	Yes	Yes		
Committee on the Rights of the Child	193	18	3	9/3	27	39 (not including the reports due under the Optional Protocols)	82	No (under development)	Yes	A/63/160, annex: 6 weeks/year (sessions), from January 2010 to January 2011; 3 weeks/year (pre-sessional working group meetings), from October 2009 to 2010 to January 2011, to allow the Committee to meet in parallel chambers	General Assembly resolution 63/244: 4 weeks/year (parallel-chamber sessions); 2 weeks/year pre-sessional working group meetings, from October 2009 to October 2010
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	173	18	2	8/0	24	87	21	Yes	No	A/63/18, para. 58: 2 weeks/year (one additional week per session) from 2010	General Assembly resolution 63/243: 2 weeks/year (one additional week per session) from August 2009 to 2011

<i>Treaty body</i>	<i>States parties</i>	<i>Number of members</i>	<i>Number of sessions of per year</i>	<i>Number of weeks of meeting time per year (session working group)</i>	<i>Number of reports examined on average per year</i>	<i>Number of reports to be considered annually if all States parties reported on time</i>	<i>Number of reports pending (as of 5 August 2010) procedure</i>	<i>List of issues</i>	<i>Additional meeting time requested</i>	<i>Additional meeting time authorized</i>
Committee against Torture	147	10	2	6/0	14	37	23 Yes	Yes (plus list of issues prior to reporting)	A 65/44: 3 weeks/year (1 additional session per year) 2011 to 2012	
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	186	23	3	9/5 (Working Group on Communications, 2 weeks per year; Working Group on Reporting, 3 weeks per year)	24	47	34 Yes	Yes	General Assembly resolution 62/218: 3-week session (3 weeks/year) from January 2010; 3 sessions of Working Group on Communications/year from January 2010 (currently 10 days/year)	
Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers	43	14	2	3/0	4	11	7 Yes	Yes		
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	89 (increasing to 18 after the next election, in 2010)	12	2	2/0 The Committee will examine its first report in October 2010	22	22	3 Yes	Yes		
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture	54 (increasing to 25 after the next election, in 2010)	10	3	3/0	—	—	No (undertakes in situ visits)	—		
Total	1 211	141	22	55/13	112	308	225			

(162 in 2011)